



Ecology Center UtahStateUniversity®

ECOLOGY CENTER GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS for MS and PhD STUDENTS (2024 - 2025)

The Ecology Center invites proposals from MS and PhD students pursuing Ecology degrees to support thesis/dissertation research at up to \$2,000 for MS research and \$5,000 for PhD research. These awards are intended for Ecology graduate students who do not have other forms of support for the research they propose. Research awards are offered for the 2024 - 2025 fiscal year.

The research awards will be competitive, and selection will be based on scientific merit, quality of the proposal, and relevance to the field of ecology. The proposal should be no longer than 4 pages (including figures and tables, but excluding literature cited, budget and justification, and 2-page resume) and should be signed by the major professor certifying that it is the student's work.

Eligibility:

MS students must be in their second semester or later of their graduate program and PhD students must be in the second year or later of their graduate program as of the 2024 Spring Semester. Students must also be in residence at USU (apart from conducting research elsewhere). Students who already have received one research award may request support for a second year. Requests for a third year of Ecology Center research support will be considered only if more funds are available than are exhausted by competitive proposals from students who have not yet received two years of support. Students requesting a second or third research award must also submit a progress report of no more than 4 pages. The progress report should be substantive, containing data/results and inferences, and should describe how past Ecology Center funds have been used to advance the student's graduate degree program and career goals.

Proposal Format:

The proposal should focus on the research that will be completed with the requested funding. It should make clear how this work fits into the overall thesis or dissertation.

The proposal should include the following sections:

- Applicant: Name, Degree sought, Major department, Major Professor
- Degree Information: Start date and anticipated completion date of degree program.
- Proposal Title
- Introduction: Sketch the background and rationale for the research, citing appropriate literature. Describe the significance of the research.
- Research Objectives/Hypotheses: Describe what specific hypothesis/hypotheses are to be tested or what specific scientific questions are to be addressed. These should be motivated by the information in the Introduction.

- Research Methods: Describe how the research hypotheses will be tested and evaluated or how research questions will be explored and answered (e.g., sampling or experimental designs, statistical and sampling methods, how the analyses will be used to draw conclusions about the hypotheses or questions, timeline for data collection and project completion).
- Literature Cited
- Itemized Budget: Describe how the research funds will be used and provide an itemized categorical budget, using the template below. Include all and only what is to be funded by the funding requested here. The budget needs to be sufficiently detailed for a reviewer to understand how funds will be used to achieve the specific goals described in the proposal.
Ecology Center Graduate Research Awards cannot be used for the graduate students' salary or stipend or to purchase computers (desktop, laptop, tablet, etc.) or software. Awards can be used to hire field assistants, to purchase research supplies, and for travel to field research sites. The Ecology Center has a separate program that provides funds for travel to professional meetings to present results, and travel for this purpose cannot be included in Graduate Research Awards.
- Budget Justification: In addition to the table, you must also explain/justify the requested expenses in Text format, explaining how they will contribute to the specific goals of your proposal.

Ecology Center Award Basic Budget Template

Applicant:

Proposal Title

Labor Dollars

	RATES		
	Current	Hourly Wage (Payroll)	
	Benefits		
<u>Employee:</u>	<u>Labor Dollars:</u>	<u>Benefits:</u>	<u>Labor and Benefits</u>
Labor & Fringe Dollars			

TRAVEL

Domestic Travel	
Foreign Travel	
Total Travel	\$ -

OTHER DIRECT COSTS

Other Direct Costs	\$ -

TOTAL BUDGET	\$ -
---------------------	------

- Two-page Resume, including educational training and background and emphasizing research, engagement, and outreach activities and products

Submit one printed copy to the Ecology Center Office (NR 314) and one electronic copy to ecology.center@usu.edu.

Deadlines:

Friday, February 23, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – Proposal due in Ecology Center office.

Friday, March 22, 2024 – Awards announced.

July 1, 2024 – Funding commences. **If your research would require having some or all funds available to spend before July 1, you should note that in your proposal.** Funds may not be available before July 1, but often we are able to provide some funding earlier to meet project timeline needs.

June 30, 2025 – End of funding period; unspent funds will be returned to the Ecology Center. **Awards should be fully expended by June 15.**

September 30, 2025. Submit a final report of no more than 4 pages to the Ecology Center detailing results, products, and outcomes of the funded research.